

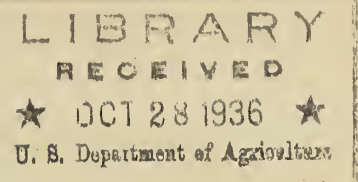
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Guides to Buying Silk Hose



A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered Thursday, August 27, 1936, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, and broadcast by NBC and a network of 50 associated radio stations.

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MR. SALISBURY: Farm and Home folks, your friend Ruth Van Deman is here today, prepared to give you facts on "How to get your money's worth when you buy silk stockings". Miss Van Deman, it's too bad you're so late with this information.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Late? I didn't know I was late.

MR. SALISBURY: You're just a little more than 350 years late -- to help the first woman who ever wore finely knit silk stockings.

MISS VAN DEMAN: She didn't need any help from me, Morse -- if you mean Queen Elizabeth.

MR. SALISBURY: She's the lady I had in mind, all right. Do you know that her silk-woman once knitted her a pair of silk stockings? And after that the red-headed Queen swore she'd never wear the "sewn" kind again? She didn't, either.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I'd forgotten that story about the Queen's silk-woman. You know when Lee invented his stocking machine, Queen Elizabeth was greatly disappointed because it would knit only wool. But Lee kept right on working, and nine or ten years later he gave the Queen a pair of machine-made silk hose.

MR. SALISBURY: 'Twas ever thus. Yesterday's luxuries become today's necessities ... From what I hear, silk stockings are a big item now in a lady's clothing budget.

MISS VAN DEMAN: They certainly are -- much larger than we know unless we keep a record for a year. On my way to the studio just now, I stopped to buy two more pairs. I bought five-thread stockings, semi-service weight, as this store called them.

MR. SALISBURY: May I inquire what you mean by five-thread, semi-service weight?

MISS VAN DEMAN: I'll explain. But first, let's begin at the beginning of a silk stocking. After all, we wouldn't be wearing silk stockings if the silk worms, over in China and Japan, weren't spinning filaments around themselves, layer after layer, building cocoons. Sometimes these filaments are as much as 1500 yards long.

MR. SALISBURY: You don't say! How many of these filaments does it take to make one thread?

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MISS VAN DEMAN: Five, usually. That is, the filaments from five cocoons are reeled off at the same time, and twisted together to form one thread. Naturally this thread, made of only five delicate filaments, is very fine. Morse, have you ever seen a "one-thread" stocking?

MR. SALISBURY: I don't believe I have, at least not to know it.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well you could almost look at without seeing it, it's so sheer that it is almost invisible when it's on a person. You could easily put a pair to that old test of drawing them through a wedding ring. Two and three-thread stockings are also very sheer, intended for evening and party wear, not for everyday. The National Association of Hosiery Manufacturers is proposing to group stockings into three classes. They call them sheer or chiffon, or semi-service, and service. Most of the semi-service fall in the 6 to 8 thread class. They're the weight that lots of business women prefer for office and street wear. But if you are doing a lot of walking or if you want a heavier stocking that will really last, then service weight is the better choice. It may have 8, 9, 10, or more threads.

MR. SALISBURY: Then you home economists recommend choosing your silk stockings to fit the occasion.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, we do. And we're rather stony-hearted toward the women who complain that their stockings don't last any time, when we observe that they're expecting thin chiffon to do the duty of service weight.

MR. SALISBURY: You spoke about the hosiery manufacturers and the terms they're proposing. Are those in use everywhere?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Not by any means, yet. There's still a great deal of confusion in terms for hosiery, but this association is bravely trying to bring order out of chaos and standardize the markings and establish a uniform grading system. If their plan goes through we may some day see hosiery marked Standard B, and all irregulars or seconds plainly stamped as such. Standard A merchandise would not be stamped, but all other full-fashioned hosiery for women would be.

MR. SALISBURY: Sounds like a very progressive policy.

MISS VAN DEMAN: It is.

MR. SALISBURY: Ruth, I wish you'd explain that term "full-fashioned". You used it a moment ago and I've noticed it in hosiery ads. Does it indicate something about quality?

MISS VAN DEMAN: In a certain sense, yes. "Full-fashioned" means that the stocking has been knit flat, shaped to fit the leg, and seamed together down the back of the leg and along the bottom of the foot. Full-fashioned hose fit better and hold their shape better than those that are knit round and round like a tube. Those are called circular hose and in the women's sizes they sometimes have fake seams and marks in imitation of the full-fashioned.

MR. SALISBURY: Tricks in all trades, but in spite of them all I take it you succeed in finding fairly satisfactory goods.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Oh, yes, when I take time I can generally locate the correct weight for the purpose I want. Then I make sure they are elastic, properly reinforced, and the correct size for my foot.

MR. SALISBURY: Elastic? Do you have to check on that? I thought all modern machine-knit hose had plenty of stretch.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Some may stretch but they may not return to shape. If the manufacturer has skimped in the knitting, a stocking may be so inelastic that it will burst before it gives. Or a poor quality stocking may stretch until it is baggy. As to reinforcements, the welt, that is, the top into which the garters are fastened, should be heavier than the leg of the stocking, and from three to four inches wide. Some hose have a shadow welt below the top welt, and a line of openwork, like hemstitching, that stops garter runs. Heel reinforcements, to be of service, should come at least two and three-fourths inches above the heel. Women who cooperated in a recent series of tests in Montana found that heels reinforced with cotton wore longer than those reinforced with silk. Toe and sole reinforcements should also be durable. Sole reinforcements, for everyday wear, should come up well over the large toe joint.

MR. SALISBURY: What about size? Should my sock -- or your silk stocking -- be much longer than your foot?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Usually, your stocking should be one-half to three-fourths of an inch longer than your foot when bearing weight. And by the way, well-fitting shoes make hose last longer. Some tests of a typical group of Americans indicate that only one-seventh of the women's shoes are properly fitted. No wonder we complain about our stockings wearing out too soon!

MR. SALISBURY: Thank you for an interesting talk, Miss Van Deman. We'll be looking for you next week.

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